

OPINION

OUR VIEW

Keeping an open mind

The fear of the unknown may have been squelched a bit with a recent report by the International Falls mayor.

Mayor Bob Anderson told the International Falls City Council and Koochiching County Board that a discussion with Packaging Corporation of America CEO Mark W. Kowlzan revealed that he is an “old papermaker.”

Anderson said Kowlzan reached out to him after the announcement that his Illinois-based company would purchase Boise Inc. and its 30 facilities, including the Falls paper mill.

The cash deal valued at nearly \$2 billion was announced in September and expected to be completed before the end of the year.

Clearly, the announcement of the purchase, coming on the heels of the termination of 265 jobs at the mill by Oct. 1, cause a ripple of concern. And without any information about what PCA has planned for this mill and the remaining 580 jobs a little fear may have crept into area resident’s minds.

And while the Falls mayor said the PCA CEO provided no details about plans for the local mill,

he did provide a little comfort. Kowlzan said in his 15 years with International Paper and as a former competitor of Boise, he has great respect for the Falls mill and looks forward to owning it.

Kowlzan told Anderson he has visited the Falls several times and looks forward to returning. And, he told Anderson, after the sale closes he wants to meet with mill employees and local leaders.

We, too, look forward to meeting Kowlzan and hearing about his company and its plans for our mill.

And in the meantime, we support Anderson’s idea that we all must work to create the right climate for this mill and PCA to succeed here.

Anderson pointed to keeping taxes from increasing while at the same time maintaining the services and amenities that residents have come to expect and the mill needs to get wood to the mill and the mill’s products to its customers.

That said, Borderland, let’s work together toward that effort and keep a open mind when it comes to PCA’s ownership of the mill.



GUEST COLUMN

Weaker by the week

A lot of people are asking what the heck is wrong with the Republican Party.

What isn’t?

That’s no joke. Not for the GOP, not for the country.

The party of Ronald Reagan is getting weaker by the week.

Republican failure, Republican infighting, Republicans caving on their principles — it’s a grim soap opera, and it’s playing out on the cable news channels every day.



Michael REAGAN
MAKING SENSE

How did the Republican Party ever fall to such depths?

The GOP was flying high when my father led it to victories in 1980 and 1984 on platforms built solidly — and proudly — on conservative principles.

So how was he so successful? It wasn’t just his conservative gospel, his communication skills or his sunny personality. My father had a man named Michael K. Deaver by his side for a long time.

When Deaver died in 2007, The Washington Post called him the “media maestro” who “shaped President Ronald Reagan’s public image for 20 years, transforming American politics with his powerful gift for image-making.”

Yes, Mike Deaver was a master of media stagecraft. But he was much more. He was the public relations arm of Ronald Reagan. He understood politics, the media, and the heart and mind of my father.

Deaver was able to marry all those things for the betterment of Ronald Reagan — and therefore the betterment of the Republican Party, conservatism and America.

You don’t see anyone like Deaver in today’s fractious

Republican Party.

You don’t see anyone who understands how important it is to use the mainstream media to create the political perceptions that ultimately change the political reality.

Even though they talk about my father incessantly, Republican Party “leaders” don’t understand that it was Deaver and others, such as Lyn Nofziger, who made him a success.

They weren’t consultants to my father or the Republican Party. They were around Ronald Reagan because they were true believers in Ronald Reagan.

Right now, I don’t know if the Republican Party has anyone it can trust to lead it out of the basement. John Boehner can’t get anything done because Republicans are so fractionalized.

As we said last week, it’s been government by tantrum, but at some point that’s got to end.

This is where a Deaver or a Nofziger — the adult supervision — would have come in and said, “This is what needs to be said and done to save the GOP’s butt and reputation.”

So what can the Republican Party do now to show itself in a better light — not to Republicans, not to the Tea Party, but to the nation as a

whole?

The GOP is always going to be a minority party, so the only way it can win in the long run is when it’s inclusive, not exclusive.

The GOP has to come out of this Obamacare/government shutdown debacle showing itself to be more inclusive, instead of being exclusive and pushing people out, which they can no longer afford to do.

At this point the president is not leading. But neither are the Republicans. They’re fighting, but they’re not leading.

It doesn’t matter that the Republicans’ failed attempt to stop or delay Obamacare was a “good fight” for conservative principles and the long-term good of the American people.

The drawn-out, poorly thought-out fight was doomed from the start and only weakened the GOP brand further.

To genuine conservatives, the GOP has become a party of spineless losers whose core beliefs about the size, scope and legitimate activities of government are virtually interchangeable with Democrats.

Yes, Republicans need another great leader to resurrect the party of Ronald Reagan. But they also need another Michael Deaver.

Otherwise, we may see the disintegration of the GOP as an important political force in the running of a government that gets bigger and nastier every day.

Reagan is the son of President Ronald Reagan, a political consultant, and the author of “The New Reagan Revolution” (St. Martin’s Press). His column is distributed exclusively by Cagle Cartoons newspaper syndicate.

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Share your point of view

Make a difference by writing a letter to the editor or contributing to our online discussions. The Journal’s Opinion page is where meaningful community discussions take place.

To the editor,
Attending the meeting concerning the Donahue property was a real eye-opener.
We cannot afford this “gift.”

When the citizens of International Falls learn the facts, I believe they will agree.
The pessimists say we don’t care enough to speak up; let’s prove them wrong.

Call your council representative and voice your opinion.
Marian O’Brien
International Falls, MN

The Journal welcomes letters from readers

Letters should be limited to 500 words or less. Longer letters may be edited. Letters must be signed and include the telephone number and address of the letter writer. Only the author’s city address will be published.
Mail letters to The Journal, 1602 Highway 71, International Falls 56649. Letters can also be sent by e-mail to laurel@ifallsjournal.com.